

# THE LITERARY FOCUS.

"Stilus optimus, et præstantissimus dicendi effector ac magister."

VOL. I.—MIAMI UNIVERSITY, OXFORD, O. MAY, 1828.—NO. 12.

EDITED BY THE ERODELPHIAN AND UNION LITERARY SOCIETIES.

From the Literary Souvenir.

## THE LITTLE BROOK & THE STAR.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SOLITARY HOURS."

Once upon a time—that's the true way of beginning a story, though I am not going to tell one about kings and queens, giants or fairies, talking birds, singing water, or little green dogs with one ear,—only about a little Brook and a Star. So you must know, that once upon a time, in the leafy covert of a wild, woody dingle, there lived (for it was indeed a thing of life,) a certain little Brook that might have been the happiest creature in the world, if it had but known when it was well, and been content with the station assigned to it by an unerring Providence. But in that knowledge, and that content, consists the true secret of happiness, and the silly little Brook never found out the mystery until it was too late to profit by it.

I cannot say positively from what source the little Brook came, but it appeared to well out from beneath the hollow root of an old thorn; and collecting together its pellucid waters, so as to form a small pool within that knotty reservoir, it swelled imperceptibly over its irregular margin and slipped away unheard—almost unseen, among mossy stones and entangling branches.

Never was emerald so green—never was velvet so soft, as the beautiful moss which encircled that tiny lake—and it was gemmed and embroidered too by all flowers that love the shade. "Pale primroses that die unmarried—violets dim, but sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes, or Cy-

therea's breath." Anemonies, with their fair downcast heads, and starry clusters of Forget-me-not, less darkly brightly blue, than if the sun had kissed their heavenly azure; but looking more lovingly with their pale, tender eyes, into the bosom of their native rill.

And there wanted not, upon that mossy brink, the broad magnificent leaves of the downy coltsfoot—nor the plummy sprays of the tree fern, and the glossy adder's tongue, springing from the roots of that old thorn, and dipping down into the dark cool water.

The hawthorn's branches were interwoven above with those of a glorious holly; and a woodbine, climbing up the stem of one tree, flung across to the other its flexile arms; knotting together the mingled foliage, with its rich clusters and elegant festoons, like a fair sister, growing up under the guardianship of two beloved brothers, and by her endearing witchery drawing together in closer union their already united hearts.

Never was little brook so delightfully situated—so happily circumstanced! for its existence, though secluded, was neither monotonous nor solitary. A thousand trifling incidents (trifling, but not uninteresting,) were perpetually varying the scene; and innumerable living creatures, the gentlest and loveliest of the sylvan tribes, familiarly haunted its retreat.

Beautiful there was every season and its change!—In the year's fresh morning—in May, delicious May! or ripening June, if a light breeze but stirred in the hawthorn tops, down on

the dimpling water came a shower of milky blossoms, loading the air with fragrance as they fell. And thickly scattered on the dewy moss lay the odorous tubes of the honeysuckle, flung carelessly away by the Elfin Hunters, as the last blast of the morte, wound through those small clarions, died away with unearthly sweetness down the moonlight glade.

Then came the squirrel, with his mirthful antics. Then (rustling through fern and brushwood) stole the timid hare—half startled, as she slaked her thirst at the still fountain, by the liquid reflection of her own large, lustrous eyes.

There was no lack of music round about. A song thrush had his domicile hard by; and even at night his mellow voice was heard, contending with a nightingale, in scarce unequal rivalry. And other vocalists innumerable awoke those woodland echoes. Sweetest of all, the low tremulous call of the ringdove floated at intervals through the shivering foliage, the very soul of sound and tenderness.

Beautiful there was every season and its change!—In winter the glossy green, and coral clusters of the holly, flung down their rich reflections on the little pool, then visited through the leafless thorn boughs with a gleam of more perfect daylight; and a redbreast, which had built its nest and reared its young among the twisted roots of that old tree, still hovered about his summer bower, still quenched his thirst at the little Brook, still sought his food on its mossy banks; and tuning his small pipe when every feathered throat but his own was mute, took up the eternal hymn of gratitude, which began with the birthday of Nature, and shall only cease with her expiring breath.

So every season brought but change of pleasantness to that happy little Brook. And happier still it was—or might have been, in one sweet and tender companionship, to

which passing time and rivalling seasons brought no change.

True it was, no unintercepted sunshine ever glittered on its shaded waters;—but just above the spot where they were gathered into that fairy fount, a small opening in the over-arching foliage admitted by day a glimpse of the blue sky; and by night the mild, pale ray of a bright fixed Star, which looked down into the stilly water, with such tender radiance as beams from the eyes we love best, when they rest upon us with an earnest gaze of serious tenderness.

For ever, and for ever when night came, the beautiful Star still gazed upon its earth-born love, still trembled, reflected on its liquid bosom,—which seemed in truth, if a wandering air but skimmed its surface, to stir as if with life, in responsive intercourse with its bright visitant.

Oh, faithful Star! Oh, happy Brook! Who would not say so, who knows what it is to be the *one thing* cared for—thought upon—looked upon—among all the bright and beautiful things of this earth? Some malicious whispers went abroad indeed, that the enamoured gaze of that radiant eye was not always exclusively fixed on the little Brook. That it had its oblique glances for other favorites. But, I take it, those rumors were altogether libellous. Mere rural gossip—scandalous tittle-tattle, got up between two old grey, mousing owls, who went prowling about, and prying into their neighbors' concerns, when they ought

To have been in their beds at home,  
Wi' their dear little bairnies.

However that may be—though I warrant the kind creatures were too conscientious to leave the little Brook in ignorance of their candid conjectures—it did not care one fig about the matter, utterly disregarding every syllable they said; which was generous and confiding, and high spirited, and acting just as one ought to

act under such circumstances—and would have been highly creditable to the little Brook, if its light mode of dismissing the subject had not been partly owing to the engrossing influence of certain new-fangled notions and desires, which in an unhappy hour had insinuated themselves into its hitherto untroubled bosom.

Alas!—that elementary, as well as human natures, should be liable to moral infirmity! But that they are, was strongly exemplified in the instance of our luckless little Brook. You must know, that notwithstanding that leafy recess, in which it was so snugly located, was to all inward appearance sequestered as in the heart of a vast forest,—in point of fact, it only skirted the edge of a large plain, in one part of which, not distant from the wooded boundary, lay a fine sheet of water—a large pond—to which vast herds of kine and oxen came down to drink morning and evening, and wherein they might be seen standing motionless for hours together, during the sultry summer noon, when the waveless water, glowing like a fiery mirror under the meridian blaze, reflected with magical effect the huge forms and richly varied coloring of the congregated cattle, as well as those of a stately flock of milkwhite geese, every one of which “floated as double goose and shadow,” as ever did “the swan on lone St. Mary’s Lake.”

Now it so chanced, that from the nook we wot of, encircled as it was by leafy walls, there opened, precisely in the direction of the plain and the pond, a cunning little peep-hole, which must have been perforated by the demon of Mischief, and which no eye would ever have spied out, save that of a lynx, or an idle person. Alas! our little Brook was an idle person; she had nothing in the world to do from morning to night, and that is the root of all evil—so—though she might have found useful occupation (every body can, if they seek it in

right earnest), she spent her whole time in peering and prying about, till, one unlucky day, what should she hit upon but that identical peep-hole through which, as through a telescope, she discovered with unspeakable amazement the great pond, all glowing with the noonday sun,—the herds of cattle, and the flocks of geese, so brilliantly redoubled on its broad mirror.

“My stars!” ejaculated the little Brook, (little thought she that moment of the *one* faithful Star).—“My stars! what can all that be? It looks something like me, only a thousand times as big. What can be shining so upon it? And what can those great creatures be? Not hares, sure, though they have legs, and tails; but such tails! And those other white things that float about, they cannot be birds, for they have no legs, and yet they seem to have feathers and wings. What a life of ignorance have I led! Huddled up in this poor little dull place, visited only by a few mean humdrum creatures, and never suspecting that the world contained grander things, and finer company.”

Till this unfortunate discovery, the little Brook had been well enough satisfied with her condition; contented with the society of the beautiful and gentle creatures who frequented her retreat, and with the tender admiration of her own “bright unchanging Star.” But now there was an end to all content, and *no end* to garrulous discontent and endless curiosity. The latter she soon found means to satisfy, for the sky lark brought her flaming accounts of the sun, at whose court, he pretended to have *les petites entrees*, and the water-wagtail, a fowl of very diplomatic genius, was despatched to ascertain the precise nature of those other mysterious objects, so bewildering to the comprehensive faculties of the curious little Brook.

Back came the *charge d'affaires*, mopping and mowing and wagging

his tail, with the most fantastic airs of conceited importance.

"Well! what is it?" quoth my lady Brook.

"Water, upon my veracity," quoth Master Wagtail, "monstrous piece of water, five hundred thousand million times as big as your ladyship."

"And what makes it so bright and glowing, instead of my dull colour?" quoth my lady.

"The sun that shines full upon it" rejoins the envoy.

"Oh! that glorious globe the skylark talks of. How delightful it must be to enjoy *his* notice! But what are those fine great creatures with legs, and those others with wings and no legs?"

"Oh! those are cows, and oxen, and geese; but you cannot possibly comprehend their natures, never having seen any thing bigger than a hare or wood pigeon."

"How now, Master Malaped!" quoth my lady, nettled to the quick at this impertinence of a jack in office; but her curiosity was not half satiated, so she was fain to gulp down her own insulted dignity (proud people are the best swallowers in the world on some occasions), and went on questioning and cross questioning, till she was ready to bubble over with spite and envy, at Master Wagtail's marvellous relations. Poor thing! she was not up to traveller's stories, and had never heard of Sir John Mandeville.

Thenceforward the little Brook perfectly loathed her own peaceful, unobtrusive lot. She would have shrunk away had it been possible, from the poor innocent creatures who had so long enlivened her pleasant solitude. And worst of all—most unpardonable of all—she sickened at the sight of her benignant Star, which continued to look down upon her as fondly and kindly as ever, still happily unconscious of her heartless estrangement.

Well, she went on fretting and re-

pinning from day to day, till dame nature, fairly tired out with her wayward humour, resolved to punish her as she deserved by granting her heart's desire.

One summer morning came two sturdy woodmen, armed with saws, axes, and bill-hook; to work they went, lopping, hewing and clearing, —and before nightfall there lay the little Brook, exposed to the broad canopy of heaven, revealed in all its littleness, and effectually relieved from the intrusion of those despised, insignificant creatures, which had been scared from their old familiar haunt by that day's ruthless execution.

"Well," quoth the little Brook, "*this* is something like life! What a fine world this is! A little chilly though, and I feel I don't know how, quite dazzled and confounded. But to-morrow, when that great red orb comes over head again, I shall be warm and comfortable enough no doubt, and then, I dare say, some of those fine great creatures will come and visit me; and who knows but I may grow as big as that great pond in time, now that I enjoy the same advantages."

Down went the sun, up rose the moon, outshone an innumerable host of sparkling orbs, and among them that "bright particular Star" looked out, pre-eminent in stationary lustre.

Doubtless its pure and radiant eye dwelt with tender sorrow on the altered condition of its beloved little Brook. But that volatile and inconstant creature, quite intoxicated with her change of fortune, and with the fancied admiration of the twinkling myriads she beheld, danced and dimpled in the true spirit of flirtation with every glittering spark, till she was quite bewildered among the multitude of her adorers, and welcomed the grey hour of dawn, without having vouchsafed so much as one glance of recognition at her old, unalienated friend.



Down went the moon and stars, up rose the sun, and higher and higher he mounted in the cloudless heaven, and keener waxed the impatience of the ambitious little Brook. Never did court beauty so eagerly anticipate her first presentation to the eye of majesty! And at last arrived the hour of fruition. Right over-head careered the radiant orb! down darted his fervid, fiery beams, down vertically upon the centre of the little Brook; penetrating upon its shallow waters, to the very pebbles beneath.

At first it was so awed and agitated, and overpowered by the condescending notice of majesty, fancying (as small folks are apt to fancy) that it had attracted peculiar observation—that it was hardly sensible of the unusual degree of warmth which began to pervade its elementary system; but presently when the fermentation of its wits had a little subsided, it began to wonder how much hotter it should grow, still assuring itself, that the sensation though very novel was exceedingly delightful.

But at length such an accession of fever came on, that the self delusion was no longer practicable, and it began to hiss and wiz, as if set over a great furnace; indeed its pebbly basin was pretty nearly red hot. Oh, what would the little Brook have given now, for only one bough of the holly or the hawthorn, to intercept those intolerable rays! or for the gentle winnowing of the blackbird's wing, or even the poor robin's to fan its glowing bosom. But those protecting boughs lay scattered around, those small shy creatures had sought out a distant refuge, and my lady Brook had nothing left for it but to endure what she could not alter. "And after all," quoth she, "its only for a little while; by and by, when his majesty only looks sideways at me, I shall be less overcome with his royal favour, and in time, no doubt, be able to sustain his full gaze, without any of these un-

becoming flutters, all owing to my rustic education, and the confined life I have hitherto led."

Well, "his majesty" withdrew westward as usual, and my lady Brook began to subside into a comfortable degree of temperature, and to gaze about her again with restored complacency. What was her exultation, when she beheld the whole train of geese waddling towards her from the great pond; taking that new way homewards out of sheer curiosity I suppose; for your goose is oftentimes an exceedingly curious bird, though not remarkable for acute observation.

As the goodly company drew nearer and nearer, our Brook admired the stateliness of their carriage, and persuaded herself it was eminently graceful, "for undoubtedly they are persons of distinguished rank," quoth she; "and how much finer voices they must have than those little vulgar fowls whose twittering used to make me so nervous."

Just then the whole flock set up such a gabbling and screeching as they passed close by, that the little Brook well nigh leapt out of her reservoir with horror and amazement; and to complete her consternation, one fat old dowager goose, straggling awkwardly out of the line of march, plumped right down into the middle of the pool, flouncing and floundering about at a terrible rate, filling its whole circumference with her ungainly person, and scrambling out again with an unfeeling precipitation, which cruelly disordered the unhappy victim of her barbarous outrage.

Hardly were they out of sight, those awful and unmannerly creatures,—hardly had the poor little brook begun to breathe, after that terrible visitation, when all her powers of self possession were called for, by the abrupt approach of another and more prodigious personage. A huge ox, goaded by the intolerable

stinging of a gad fly, broke away from his fellows of the herd and from his cool station in the great pond, and came galloping down in his blind agony, lashing the air with his tail, and making the vale echo with his furious bellowing. To the woods just beyond the new cleared spot he took his frantic course, and the little Brook lying in his way, he splashed into it and out of it without ceremony, or probably so much as heeding the hapless object subjected to his ruffian treatment.

That one splash pretty nearly annihilated the miserable little Brook.

The huge forehoofs forced themselves into its mossy bank. The hind ones, with a single extricating plunge, pounded bank and Brook together into a muddy hole; and the tail, with one insolent whisk, spattered half the conglomerated mass of black defilement over the surrounding herbage.

And now what was wanting to complete the ruin and degradation of the unhappy little Brook. A thick black puddle was all that remained of the once pellucid pool, from which, in its altered state, not the meanest creature that crawled or flew would have condescended to quench its thirst, which defiled, instead of refreshing the adjacent verdure, and was become utterly incapable of reflecting any earthly or heavenly object.

Poor little Brook! if it had erred greatly, was it not greatly humbled? Methinks we begin to take compassion on it. Who would insult the fallen?

Night came again. "How beautiful is night!" but darkness was on the face of the unhappy Brook, and well for it that it was total darkness; for in that state of conscious degradation, how could it have sustained the searching gaze of its pure forsaken Star?

Long, dark and companionless was the first night of misery; and when

morning dawned, though the turbid water had regained a degree of transparency, it had shrunk away to a tenth part of its former fair "proportion;" so much had it lost by evaporation in that fierce solar alembic—so much from absorption, in the loosened and choking soil of its once firm and beautiful margin; and so much by dispersion, from the wasteful havoc of its destructive invaders.

Again the great sun looked down upon it—again the vertical beams drank fiercely of its shrunken water; and when evening came, no more remained of the poor little Brook, than just so many drops as filled the hollow of one of those large pebbles which had paved its unsullied basin, in the day of its brightness and beauty.

But never in the season of its brightest plenitude was the water of the little Brook so clear—so perfectly clear and pure, as that last portion, which lay like a liquid gem in the small concave of that polished stone.

It had been filtered from every grosser particle—refined by rough discipline—purified by adversity—even from those lees of vanity and light mindedness, which had adulterated its sparkling waters in their prosperous state.

Just as the last sunbeam was withdrawing its amber light from that small pool, the old familiar robin hopped on the edge of the hollow pebble, and dipping his beak once and again in the diminished fount which had slaked his thirst so often and so long, dropped his russet wings with a slight quivering motion, and broke forth into a short, sweet gust of parting song, before he winged his way for ever from his expiring benefactress.

Twilight had melted into night—dark night—for neither moon nor stars were visible through the thick clouds that canopied the earth. In darkness and silence lay the little

Brook; forgotten it seemed, even by its benignant Star, as though its last drop were exhaled into nothingness—its languishing existence already struck out of the list of created things.

Time *had* been, when such apparent neglect would have excited its highest indignation—but time *now* was, that it submitted humbly and resignedly to the deserved infliction. And after a little while, looking fixedly upwards, it almost fancied that the *form*, if not the radiance of the beloved Star, was faintly perceptible through the intervening darkness. The little Brook was not deceived: cloud after cloud rolled away from the central Heaven, till at last the unchanging Star was plainly discernible through the fleecy vapour which yet obscured its perfect lustre. But through that silvery veil; the beautiful Star looked intently on its repentant love; and there was more of tenderness of pity and reconciliation, in that dim, trembling gaze, than if the pure heavenly dweller had shone out in perfect brightness on the frail, humbled creature below. Just then a few large drops fell heavily from the departing cloud, and one, trembling for a moment with starry light, fell like a forgiving tear, into the bosom of the little pool.

Long—long and undisturbed (for no other eye looked out from Heaven ~~that~~ night) was the last mysterious communion of the reconciled friends. No doubt that voiceless intercourse was yet eloquent of hope and futurity; for though all that remained of the poor little Brook was sure to be exhausted by the next day's fiery trial, it would but change its visible form to become an imperishable essence: and who can tell whether the elementary nature, so purged from earthly impurities, may not have been received up into the sphere of its heavenly friend, and indissolubly united with the celestial substance.

### SCHOOL TEACHERS.

A trust is generally accounted honourable in proportion to its importance and the order of the qualities or acquirements requisite for the discharge of it. There is however one striking exception to this rule in the instance of the instructors of youth, who, especially appointed to communicate the knowledge and accomplishments which may command respect in the persons of their pupils, are in their own denied every thing beyond the decencies of a reluctantly accorded civility, and often are refused even those barren observances. The treatment which tutors, governesses, ushers, and the various classes of preceptors, receive in this boasted land of liberality, is a disgrace to the feeling as well as to the understanding of society. Every parent acknowledges that the domestic object of the first importance is the education of his children. In obtaining the services of an individual for this purpose, he takes care to be assured that his morals are good, and his acquirements beyond the common average,—in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand, we may add, beyond those which he himself possesses, and on which he sufficiently prides himself. When he has procured such a man as he believes this to be, he treats him with perhaps as much courtesy as his cork-drawer, and shows him less favour than his groom. The mistress of the family pursues the same course with the governess which the master adopts toward the tutor. The governess is acknowledged competent to form the minds and manners of the young ladies—to make indeed the future woman: but of how much more consequence in the household is she who shapes the mistress's caps, and gives the set to her head-dress—the lady's maid! The unhappy teachers in almost every family are only placed just so much above the servants as to provoke in

them the desire to pull them down, an inclination in the vulgar menials which is commonly encouraged by the congenial vulgar and jealous pride of the heads of the house, impatient of the intellectual equality or superiority which they have brought within their sphere. The remark however does not apply to the narrow-minded only. All of us regard too lightly those who make a profit of communicating what all of us prize, and what we know entitles us to respect when we possess it. Some carry their neglect or contempt further than others, but all are in a greater or less degree affected by the vicious standard of consideration common in the country. The instructors of youth serve for low wages; that is a sufficient cause for their being slighted, where money puts its value on every thing and being. The butler and groom indeed serve for less than the tutor; but, beside the lowness of price, there is another ingredient in the condition of the last, which is, the accompaniment with it of a claim to respect on the score of the very acquirements which in the market command so slender a requital. It is this very claim, so ill substantiated in hard cash, the secret force of which wounds the self-love of purse-proud nothingness, which sinks the poor tutor in regard below the man of corks or curry-combs. We will not deny too that there are families in which the care of wine and the training of horses are really accounted, though not confessed, of superior importance to the care and training of youth. These are extreme cases, however, which we would not put. The common one is that of desiring and supposing every thing respectable in the preceptor, and denying him respect—of procuring an individual to instil virtue and knowledge into the minds of youth, and showing them at the same time the practical and immediate example of virtue and knowledge neglected or despised in his person.

How can a boy (and boys are shrewd enough) believe that the acquirements, the importance of which is dinned in his ears, are of any value in commanding the respect of the world, when he witnesses the treatment, the abject social lot, of the very man who, as best stored with them, has been chosen for his instructor? Will he not naturally ask, How can these things obtain honor for me, which do not command even courtesy for him who is able to communicate them to me?

We remember in a little volume treating on instruction to have seen this anecdote:—

“A lady wrote to her son, requesting him to look out for a young lady, respectably connected, possessed of various elegant accomplishments and acquirements; skilled in the languages, a proficient in music, and above all of an unexceptionable moral character; and to make her an offer of £40 a-year for her services as a governess. The son’s reply was—

“My dear Mother,—I have long been looking out for such a person as you describe; and when I have the good fortune to meet with her, I propose to make her an offer, not of £40 a-year, but of my hand, and to ask her to become, not your governess, but my wife.”

Such are the qualities expected and supposed in instructors; and yet what is notoriously their treatment?

*Examiner.*

From the Token.

### MOON LIGHT ADVENTURE.

“How beautiful is night.”

A few years ago, in the course of a pedestrian tour along the banks of the Hudson, I stopped for the night at a little tavern situated near the river. It was a wild spot, and surrounded by a thick copse of low oak trees. In the course of the evening I was induced to take a stroll, the air being pleasant, and the moon sending a flood of light over the landscape.



I left the travelled road and entered the forest. At length I fell into a little foot-path, along which I walked without marking the distance, or the direction of my ramble. By and by, I came to a cottage, but the door was shut, and I continued my walk. I now emerged from the forest, and the foot-path led me along a high bank which overhung the river. Its broad surface was smooth and glassy, and it flowed on so quietly that the image of the moon seemed as firmly set in its water, as did the planet itself in the sky.

I still went on, filled with the beauty of the night and the sweet serenity of nature around me. A thousand delightful dreams passed through my imagination, each touching my heart with some corresponding emotion. Suddenly my ear was filled with the sweetest music. It was the voice of a woman, and at a little distance I saw a female standing on the brink of the river. She leaned toward the water, and apparently unconscious that a listener was near, she poured her melody over its bosom. I fancied that its current flowed smoother, and that its ripples whispered with a softer cadence, as if listening to the sound. The breathing melody of the voice I cannot give: the words were as follows:

Oh! swiftly floats the stream,  
Its waters will not stay,  
They glide like pleasure's dream.  
Away, away.

The laughing ripples flash  
With many a silver ray;  
But light as love they dash  
Away, away.

The eddies, clear as glass,  
Like lingering lovers lay,  
But soon like lovers pass,  
Away, away.

But other waves as bright,  
Along those waves will stray.  
Then let them speed their flight,  
Away, away.

My imagination was wrought up to the highest pitch. The outlines of the fair one's figure, as I traced it

on the face of the moon lit-water, seemed beautiful as the matchless marble of the Venus de Medici. The words of the poet were in my mind, and they broke from my lips:

'Oh! ne'er did Grecian chisel trace  
A nymph, a Naiad, or a Grace,  
Of fairer form or lovelier face.

My voice had broken the holy silence that reigned over the scene. The fair one started: she turned her face suddenly towards me. Good Heavens! *It was black!!!*

FROM THE NEW MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

### FEMALE COWARDICE.

———"Oh quanto  
Beata e la fortissima Donzella!"

TASSO.

Heroines are generally no great favorites with the sex whose deeds they emulate; men are not fond of female competitors either in bodily or mental strength, and she who reads Latin or leaps a five-barred gate is warned off by lordly man as an unlicensed and unqualified poacher upon his manors. Wo to the Amazon and the blue-stocking! each is too likely to incur the same dreadful denunciation which Cardinal Mazarin launched against Mademoiselle de Montpensier when she mounted the ramparts of the Bastile; of each it may most probably be said "*elle a tue son mari.*" For my own part, I differ on these subjects from the generality of mankind; if ever I marry, it shall be a woman who can break a horse or has been up in a balloon; and all my daughters shall hunt and learn mathematics in order to strengthen their nerves. Feminine tremors and palpitations may sound interesting enough to the uninitiated, but alas! they convey no pleasing ideas to him who has a mother, four sisters, three aunts, and six cousins, all the most preposterous and clamorous cowards in existence. God bless them all! I love them sincerely, perceive and appreciate their numerous good qualities, would do any

thing on earth to serve and oblige them; but I wish they would not ask me to walk with them about London. Country rambles are bad enough, we are sure to meet mad bulls disguised like milch-cows, or ruffians in carters' frocks, to hear a hornet's hum in every breeze, and see adders coiled in every hedge; but London expeditions are a thousand times worse. Unfortunately, my mother and aunts are so complimentary as to prefer my arm to any other support; and, when lovers and dangles are not at command, the younger ladies frequently request my escort. I find myself unequal to refusal or demur; but, after one of these bewildering excursions, I return home very kindly disposed towards the heroines of history and romance, and often indulge myself in fond imaginations as to the quiet comfortable walks I should have with a Marfisa on one arm, and a Britomart on the other. No startings and screamings, no dashing half distracted into a shop at the glimpse of a distant ox, no scampering full speed over a crossing because a hackney-coach is at thirty yards distance. I feel assured that the Senora Padilla would have made no objection to walking past the two cavaliers at the horse-guards, nor would Aldrude, Countess of Bertinora, have crossed the road to avoid a Newfoundland dog. Perhaps to some persons there may be nothing very alluring in the idea of a lady, who, like Camilla, "*medias inter cædes exultat*," or like the tiger-nursed Clorinda:—

"Chi veste Parmi, e se d'uscirne agogna,  
Vassene, e non la tien tema o veegogna"—  
but I confess I should very much prefer them to Erminia, "*timida e smarrita*," of whom I have, unfortunately, too many specimens in my own family.

Why should not English ladies be embodied into regiments like the King of Dahomey's three thousand wives, taught to stand fire, and cur-

ed of all nervous affections to life by the sight of a field of battle? But, if this were objected to, surely female seminaries might be established for the express purpose of teaching courage, where the pupils should be arranged in classes, and urged to emulation by example and reward. No uncommon bravery, no masculine hardihood should be required, but all should be taught to walk quietly by a led horse, to see a mouse run across a room without screaming, and not to be afraid of cock-chaffers, or father-long legs; and prizes should be given to those who could touch an *unloaded* gun without trembling, and see a spider on their gown without fainting away. They might be carefully instructed in many other useful particulars, and their writing-copies might run as follows, "Do not suppose all dogs are mad in the summer," or "Shrieking does not diminish danger," or "Avoid rousing your family when the wind moves your shutters." In two or three years great progress might be made in bravery, and there would be time enough afterwards for the acquirement of less useful accomplishments. Oh that such a system were adopted! Then, and only then, might we hope to find an Englishwoman capable of imitating the French lady celebrated by M. de la Lande, who scrambled up the inclined ladder at the top of St. Peter's, mounted the ball, and leaned upon the cross, "*avec une souplesse et une grace inconcevable*." I confess myself a little sceptical as to the extraordinary *grace* of such an action; but I should admire it as the symptom of a stout heart, as a tacit renunciation of the nervous tremors, "thrilling shrieks and shrieking cries" for which the generality of the sex are distinguished,—as an earnest of peaceful walks, days without hypothetical horrors, and nights undisturbed by imaginary housebreakers.

Any one would suppose that my mother had detected me in a plot for

her destruction, and that whenever I walked out with her she expected me to take the first favourable opportunity of getting her run over. She believes none of my assurances, listens to none of my arguments, and looks seriously provoked if I venture to tell her that she is in no danger. I must be blind if I do not perceive that every gig-horse is "skittish," and I am accused of obstinacy if I refuse to bear testimony of her numerous "hair-breadth escapes." Then there are such long refuges in shops while a line of drays is passing, such worrying pauses, such turning of the head from side to side, such wild, calculating glances up and down the street, so many faint attempts and precipitate returns ere the desperate resolution is taken to dash over a crossing. I am foolish enough to feel half-ashamed of myself when I see the suppressed sneer or broad grin of the passengers, while my runaway companion stops to regain her breath and collect her scattered spirits; and I should often persuade her to hide her disorder in a hackney-coach, were it not that my eldest sister, who is very frequently on my other arm, is so dreadfully frightened in a carriage that it would be only an exchange of terrors. Poor Charlotte! she has made up her mind to a broken neck, and reads every accident of the kind recorded in the papers, as if it were the counterpart of her own approaching fate. I was so little with my sisters during my boyhood, owing to our holidays seldom occurring at the same time, that I had left Westminster, and been three years at Oxford, before I became acquainted with Charlotte's peculiar fears. The discovery was most unfortunately timed. During the first vacation after I took my degree, I resolved to reward myself for past study and application by a tour through part of North Wales, and I asked my two elder sisters to be my companions. We had travelled but little, and were just

at the age to enjoy such an excursion; we were to see every sight in our way, climb every mountain, watch the sun rise from the top of Snowdon, fill our drawing-books with sketches; in short, we were to be quite happy, and we talked over our plans with great delight. Alas! in anticipation only were they delightful, for I never had a more miserable journey in my life. We set out in high glee, the weather was beautiful, our health was good, but before two days were over, I envied every one I had left behind me. Charlotte's fears showed themselves in a very short time: at the least jolt she turned pale; if a wagon passed, she expected it to take off one of our wheels; at every corner she put down all the glasses; when we were going up a hill, she assured us we were jibbing; when we went down, she clasped her hands, closed her eyes, and seemed screwing up her courage to the necessity of being dashed to pieces. Then she was always giving directions to the post-boy; now he drove too fast, now she was certain the traces were broken; sometimes a wheel was about to take fire, sometimes a horse was on the point of dropping down dead. Towards evening my sister Anna's terrors commenced: after six o'clock every man who came in sight was a footpad or a highwayman; her purse was always in her hand ready to deliver on demand; with tears in her eyes she urged me to make no resistance; and once she positively fainted away because a gentleman, with a groom behind him, politely rode up to the carriage-window to inform us we had dropped a parcel. As we approached the more mountainous country, our miseries increased; we were now scarcely ever in the carriage; Charlotte insisted upon walking whenever we came to a steep or rough road, and as this frequently occurred, we suffered the fatigue of pedestrian tourists, were completely tired and

spiritless when we arrived at our inn, unequal to an evening ramble, and glad to go to bed by daylight. I could not even have the satisfaction of scolding, for it would have been cruel to reproach one who was always reproaching herself, and whose eyes were constantly overflowing with tears of terror and penitence. Most desirous not to abridge our pleasure, she always fancied herself equal to every undertaking; always assured us over-night that she was ashamed of her previous fears, and determined to be more courageous on the morrow. Thus encouraged, we set out on ponies, or on foot, to visit some romantic scenery; but half way up a mountain Charlotte's spirits failed her, the danger is too great to be encountered—it is madness, suicide, to proceed. She will stay where she is till our return, the servant shall remain with her, it will distress her extremely if we do not go on. Accordingly all is settled; but Anna and myself are speedily recalled by violent and repeated screams—Charlotte is now certain that we must be dashed to pieces, and she never could forgive herself if she permitted us to encounter destruction so inevitable. With clasped hands and streaming cheeks she implores us to give up our design: fear is infectious, Anna thinks of mountain banditti, and joins in the request; I am at length overcome; and all the evening is spent in vain regrets for the follies of the morning. Disappointed and annoyed, condemned either to lonely excursions, or to walks curtailed by my sisters' terrors, I shortened my tour; and, after much fatigue and considerable expense, returned to London without having seen one half of the beauties I had so long and so often wished to behold. Charlotte, the contrite Charlotte, incessantly blames herself for her conduct, blushes if we talk of mountains, and weeps at the very name of Wales; and by com-

mon consent, the tour which was to furnish us with conversation for life, is an interdicted subject in the family.

My two young sisters' terrors have chosen different objects, they are infected with entomological horrors. On fine warm days in summer, ten minutes seldom pass without their starting up in consternation, flying to different corners of the room, elevating their handkerchiefs in defence, and shrinking their persons into the smallest possible compass, in order to avoid a wasp or *humble bee*. This is the first summer I have been able to persevere in reading aloud to my family; for, thanks to the cold weather in May and June, very few of these enemies of industry and literature remained to eat apricots and terrify young ladies. Their well-known hum is the signal for panic and confusion: down go work and books, and pens and pencils; Jane and Mary scream, and take to flight; their sisters seize the first implement of destruction that is at hand, and nothing more can be done or thought of, till the luckless intruder has paid the penalty of his life; and then needles and India rubber are to be found, and, before employment is quietly resumed, another tocsin sounds, another skirmish and another death. Then there is no persuading these two silly girls to join our walks in the country. At that refreshing season of cool airs and sweet smells, when only a pale streak of light tells where the sun last showed his glorious face, when the constellations are gradually spangling their various figures on the misty blue of the sky, and the soft influence of evening has sweetened those sounds which fell harshly on the ear by day, when a dog's distant howl is agreeable, and the grating of a wagon's wheels is listened to with pleasure, at this time, when it is so delightful to saunter, not to walk, and to chat in subdued tones with those we love, when



my spirits, my feelings and my affections, always seem in their best state—at this time out come my unfortunate sisters' deadly foes, the frog, the bat, and the cock-chaffer, little suspecting their power of imprisoning two fair damsels, from whose distant tread they would fly in consternation. Anna, too, is equally prevented from taking an evening ramble; for after sunset the woods and groves are peopled by banditti: and if I coax her out, while I am gazing on the boles of the trees, silvered by the rising moon, or pausing to catch the notes of a nightingale, her jaundiced eye sees a ruffian crouching behind a shrub, or her startled ear detects the distant signal whistle of a gang of robbers, then she catches me by the arm, bids me ask no questions, hurries me to the house, bars the door behind her, and intreats me to load my pistols, and fire my blunderbuss out of every window.

Though my sisters make themselves and all about them uncomfortable, and prevent sensible men from wishing to become their companions for life, yet, as they are young and handsome, they meet with much ready assistance and apparent commiseration from their male acquaintance, and have always some doughty champion at hand to protect them from runaway insects and imaginary ruffians, and to admire the changing hue of their complexions, and the pretty agitation of their elegant persons; and, unless they should be disfigured by illness or accident, I dare say, that while under thirty, they may scream at frisky calves, and faint at spiders and frogs, as often as they please, without any fear of exemplifying the fable of the boy and the wolf. But my cousin Emma H. has no such claims upon any one's compassion, for alas! she is not handsome enough to be hysterical; her eyes are not sufficiently bright to atone for tears of vain a-

larm, nor will the beauty of her mouth excuse her screaming at caterpillars and black beetles. Gentlemen observe her distress, sneer and pass on; swords do not leap from their scabbard to punish the intrusion of a dog, or the purrings of a distant kitten; when she rouses the family from their beds from some causeless terror, the trouble she gives is not counterbalanced by seeing her in her night cap; and when she shuts herself in the cellar during a thunder storm, no gallant swain begs to accompany her to her retirement. Poor girl! her life is one long panic, she has contrived to unite in herself all possible fears and apprehensions; she is scolded by the rigid, lectured by the wise, called silly by some, affected by others—her family grieve for her, her acquaintance laugh at her; but still her terrors continue too stubborn for conquest or control. On one occasion, however, she added an instance to the myriads that already existed, of the strength of woman's affection—of the mighty power of that love which will teach her to make every thing possible in the service of its object. Emma is strongly attached to her mother, to whom she was the most tender and indefatigable of nurses in an illness which endangered her life. Quiet was strictly recommended, and Emma seemed suddenly gifted with a fairy's power of treading and moving inaudibly. She performed every office required in a sick room with magical gentleness and celerity; and, when every other duty was done, took her station by her mother's pillow. One morning while the invalid's hand was yet pressed by her daughter's fingers, she gradually fell into a gentle slumber; and Emma, who knew how essential rest was to her mother's recovery, hailed this favourable symptom with inexpressible delight. Notwithstanding the cramp and numbness which ensued, Emma inviolably retained her position,

scarcely permitted herself to breathe, and withdrew her eyes from her mother's face from a sort of indefinable dread, lest their anxious glances should disturb her slumbers. In this situation a slight noise was heard, and Emma's fearful ears detected the approach of a mouse. There is no creature of which she has a greater horror; I have seen her countenance change when she heard its distant scratching, and she has nearly fainted away at the sight of one in a trap. On the present occasion, however, "love mastered fear:" she sat perfectly still, and only dreaded lest the tumultuous beating of her heart should communicate itself to the hand which held that of her mother in its gentle pressure. Presently, the curtains at the foot of the bed are seen to move, and in a few moments the little creature makes its appearance, fixes its sharp eyes on Emma's pale face, pauses for half a minute, gathers courage from her marble-like aspect, and begins to nibble some crumbs which remained on the coverlet. I am certain that what Emma suffered far exceeded mere bodily pain, it was the very *agony* of fear—fear, the intenseness of which was not diminished by its folly. The animal, undisturbed by any noise or movement, continued to approach still nearer; and, at length, as if commissioned to put Emma's affection and self-command to the fullest trial, it positively touched her hand. She felt a sort of icy pulse pervade every limb, her very heart appeared to tremble; but she retained her position, and declares that she felt no apprehension of being made to start or scream, for she had a thorough confidence in the efficacy of that feeling, which, in the breast of a woman, is often stronger than the love of life. Though all within her shook from agitation, all continued statue-like without; and it was not till the mouse was approaching her mother's arm, that Emma gently moved her

disengaged hand, and scared the little monster to its hiding-place. Her mother's sleep continued, she awoke refreshed, and when Emma left the room, little supposed that it was to give relief, by tears and violent agitation, to suppressed terror and concealed suffering. I ought to add, that her mother recovered; and, that however ludicrous some of Emma's terrors may be, her fear of a mouse is now too sacred a subject for ridicule.

Mademoiselle de la Rochejaquelein relates a beautiful instance of sudden courage springing out of alarmed affection. She was so great a coward on horseback, that even when a servant held the bridle, and a gentleman walked on each side, she would weep from apprehension. Yet, when she heard that her husband was wounded, all former fears yielded to her anxiety for him:—"Je ne voulus pas rester un moment de plus. Je pris un mauvais petit cheval qui se trouvait par hasard dans la cour; je ne laissai pas le temps d'arranger les étriers qui étaient inégaux, et je partis au grand galop; en trois quarts d'heure je fis trois grandes lieues de mauvais chemins."

It is thus that woman redeems her follies—thus that she ennobles cowardice, and sanctifies defects. I intreat pardon for every thing I have said against her—I blush, I apologize, I retract. I sat down in ill humor, for the fears of my family had just compelled me to reject a ticket for the Coronation; but I have written myself into a tolerable temper, and am better able to appreciate the affectionate anxiety of which I was the victim. I must pay some price for a thousand daily kindnesses and hourly attentions, a wakefulness to real danger, which is my safeguard in sickness, a devotedness of love which despises trouble and annihilates difficulty. If female fears annoy me abroad, female affection blesses me at

home; if my mother and sisters are determined on dying a violent death yet they would risk infection and danger to preserve my life. Women ought not to be more perfect than they are. In virtue and warmth of heart they excel us already; add strength of mind, and a calm courage, equally removed from ungraceful boldness and unreasonable fear, and we must seek our spouses in some other planet. W. E.

#### THE MARINER'S SECRET TIE.

There is a high and exquisite taste, which the seaman attains in the study of a machine that all have united to commend, which may be likened to sensibilities that the artist acquires by close and long contemplation of the noblest monuments of antiquity. It teaches him to detest those imperfections which would escape any less instructed eye; and it heightens the pleasure with which a ship at sea is gazed at by enabling the mind to keep even pace with the enjoyment of the senses. It is this powerful (and to a landsman almost incomprehensible) charm that forms the secret tie which binds the mariner so closely to his vessel, and which often leads him to prize her qualities as one would esteem the virtues of a friend, and almost to be equally enamoured of the fair proportions of his ship and those of his mistress. Other men may have their different inanimate objects of admiration; but none of their feelings so thoroughly enter into the composition of the being, as the affection which the mariner comes, in time, to feel for his vessel. It is his home, his theme of constant, and frequently of painful interest, his tabernacle, and often his source of pride and exultation. As she gratifies or disappoints his high wrought expectations, in her speed or in her fight, mid shoals or hurricanes, a character for good or luckless qualities is earned, which are as often in reality due to the skill or ignorance

of those who guide her as to any inherent qualities of the fabric. Still does the ship itself, in the eyes of the seaman, bear away the laurel of success or suffer the ignominy of defeat and misfortune; and when the reverse arrives, the result is merely regarded as some extraordinary departure from the ordinary character of the vessel, as if the construction possessed the powers of entire self-command and perfect volition.

*Red Rover.*

#### LANGUAGE.

Without language, we should be ignorant of the world's eventful story. Without it we can have no conception of social happiness—knowledge would be confined to sensation and man could claim no higher distinction than that of the brute—the wisdom of the past would be lost forever; and posterity would derive no advantages from the consciousness and achievements of the present generation—the chain of cause and effect would be broken; and the succession of events in the light of history, dissolved forever—era would have no connexion with era, nor Pole with Pole—creation would be without a record, and man without a guide—unity would be wrested from nature, and analogy from Providence—all communion between mind and mind, would be limited to the laws of instinct—Heaven and earth would be aliens; and the one would be silent because the other would be dumb!

REV. H. B. BASCOM.

It is the divine attribute of the imagination, that it is irrepressible, unconfined; that when the real world is shut out, it can create a world for itself, and, with a necromantic power, can conjure up glorious shapes and forms, and brilliant visions, to make solitude populous, and irradiate the gloom of the dungeon.

*Sketch Book.*

## ORIGINAL ESSAYS.

[FOR THE FOCUS.]

## VALUE OF LITERATURE.

It is not too bold an assertion, to say that **LITERATURE** is the central orbit of the social system. Paramount to all the other inducements to action, they are but its satellites, and shine only by the lustre which it imparts. They have no source of light and life within themselves: so when the rays of intellect beam not upon them, dark, desolate and obscure, they emit no steady illumination; and a fitful gleam, occasionally lighting up the gloom which surrounds them, is their only proof of a doubtful existence. Well may it be said that, "The human virtues of peace follow the light of the mind and bask and flourish in its rays, as the heliotrope turns and blooms under the path of the sun." Honor, glory, love, and every human distinction, deprived of the resplendency which it bestows, were but empty games. \* \* \* \*

Fame, next to happiness, is the ultimate object of all our desires and exertions,—the witching thing which lures us along the path of life,—the promised reward which supports and encourages us in the arduous line of duty,—and the fuel of hope which enkindles by anticipation, and throws a cheering blaze over the last moments of existence. We shudder at the idea of being forgotten when in our graves; and the meanest of us would spurn the thought of having it said of him, "He lived for nothing and died unremembered." It is natural for every one to wish, that when removed he may leave behind a blank in the page of existence, and be missed in the sphere which he was wont to occupy. But there is an order of other and higher aspirants, who pant for a more exalted station in the remembrance of posterity, and long to be the wonder and admiration of successive ages.

Science stands at the threshold of the temple of Fame, and all must pay their court to her who would win the smiles of that Goddess. She is Fame's almoner, and gives or withholds as she lists, the glorious meed of reputation. One while she appears as the historic muse, wielding the iron pen of truth; then with a furrowed brow, she scans the mysteries of nature and wears the garb of Philosophy; and anon under the graceful

form of Poetry, she refines the thought and elevates the mind by the harmony of verse.

The soldier may face dangers, death and all the sanguinary horrors of war, to secure the glittering, but too often fleeting and delusive phantom of honor; or actuated by more noble incentives or worthier motives, he may pay his devotions at the shrine of liberty, and encrimson with his blood the altar of patriotism. But what would avail all his "toil and privations," did not Learning lend her aid to win for him the prize of immortality. The page of history preserves his memory green and flourishing, long after the laurel which circled his brow has withered, and the triumphal arch crumbled into dust.

An Alexander, a Cæsar or a Buonaparte may subdue kingdoms; trample on the rights of nations; overrun the world with his conquests; and strike terror into the hearts of a prostrate people; but he in turn quails before the author, who, with no guide but truth, and no arms but his pen, can transmit, for him, to posterity a name untarnished by a single act of licentious baseness: or may blast his character with the foul stigma of infamous ambition, and brand him as the curse and scourge of the human race. The heroes who have elicited the admiration of the world, know this, and under the specious appearance of patronizing virtue and talent were glad to purchase at the expense of the hard earned trophies of their victories, a future remembrance of their glory.

The world would never have been conscious of the existence of Mæcenæus, had not the gratitude of Virgil and Horace prompted them to make immortal mention of him in their works. Had Homer never lived, the names of Hector, Ajax and Achilles, might have slept in endless oblivion, and the fate of Troy herself been left wrapt in the mists of fable—a theme for doubt and speculation. The heroes of Plutarch owe the celebrity of their lives to the hand of their recorder; and the splendor of the Augustan reign was but the corruscation of that talent which the munificence of the emperor attracted to his court. And what was the boasted glory of Greece, but the proud triumph of intellect?—her very soil has acquired a sacredness from the memory of the Poets, the Orators, and the Statesmen to which she gave birth.



To prove that nobility itself may be proud to wear the garland of literature, we need but recur to a few, of the many instances, where the fire of genius has glowed in the breasts of those whose veins were swelled with noble blood. In Byron, the character of the peer is merged in that of the poet; and "the author of *Childe Harold*" is a prouder appellation of distinction than to call him a Lord of the British realm. And who ever thought that the name of a Bacon acquired any additional lustre from the pride of ancestry or the honor of a title?

Nor have there been wanting examples of those who could unite the seemingly discordant characters of the man of letters and the soldier; who could blend the mild pursuits of a life of peace with the wildly tumultuous avocations of war; who could invoke the spirits of departed Genius, when surrounded by the children of living Valor; who could successfully court the smiles of the muses, amid the turmoils of the camp, or the distractions of state. Scipio, in the midst of his African conquests, ceased not to prosecute his philosophic studies; and the tent of the warrior often became the closet of meditation. England's Alfred furnishes a proof that the bay leaves may flourish in their freshness when commingled with the laurel. And the inspirations of poetry gave to the character of James the First a brilliancy which was unobscured by all the trappings of royalty. Such is the superior majesty of mind!

The pen, no less than the sword, has been a busy and powerful advocate in the cause of liberty. It was the light of mind that first fired the torch of freedom, and showed its bold defenders when and where to strike; and it is this that with more than Vestal assiduity, has cherished and kept alive the sacred flame. The bold and manly terms in which our fathers of the revolution expressed their determination to resist the encroachments of British tyranny, will be fresh in our minds, when the "deeds of arms" which manifested this resistance shall begin to fade from our recollection.

Love too, has to acknowledge the influence and the assistance of Literature. When the heart swells with the deep and moving feelings of affection, and expression is choked

with "thoughts too big for utterance,"—it is then that the language of endearment glows in the tender epistle, or the sweet strain of Poesy charms the "listening ear" of the fair one. The dull and the illiterate may indeed confess the flame; but their emotions must be of a less refined cast. It is from a cultivated mind, a vivid imagination and a tongue gifted with the powers of chaste expression, that Beauty must expect to hear "thoughts that breathe and words that burn."

Then—

"Tell her, that's young  
And shuns to have her graces spy'd,  
That hadst thou sprung  
In places, where RUDE men abide,  
Thou must have uncommended died."

The wreath of Fancy can only be woven by the hand, and worn by the brow of Erudition; and the praise of Beauty was never well sung "Invita Minerva."

But while Literature is thus dispensing its favors with a prodigal hand, itself is not impoverished by what it bestows. Like the glorious orb of day, it moves on, diffusing life and happiness from a source which is inexhaustible. Nay: Every gift which it imparts redounds to its own wealth and honor; and every ray which it sheds is reflected back upon itself with redoubled brightness.—What a happy—what a glorious disposition is this! What an incitement it gives to the emulous mind, to toil on in the road to fame! What a consolatory reflection for Genius and Talent, that while they are laying the foundation of another's eminence, they are rearing an imperishable monument to their own glory.

We congratulate ourselves that, a time is approaching, when all shall own the great transcendency of intellectual merit. The hazy atmosphere of ignorance is fast dissipating before the penetrating rays of science. Political controversies will soon pass unheeded as the idle vaporings of crazy minds: war with its desolating train of evils will be banished the earth; and mankind must learn to pay the duties of submission, where alone they can with justice be exacted. FOR, KNOWLEDGE IS AND MUST BE POWER. Who then will not aspire at something beyond the contracted sphere of the present time? And who, that is blessed with one spark of the intellectual ray, will not dare to

climb the highest pinnacle on Fame's giddy steep and light a beacon, that shall burn

"With heaven's own fire—the intense and hallowed flame,  
That Genius kindles round a deathless name."

POSTREMUS.

### THE LITERARY FOCUS.

OXFORD, O. MAY, 1828.

#### TO OUR PATRONS.

The days of the "Literary Focus" are ended. You now hold in your hand the last number which will issue from our press. Through twelve months of toil—we might say of vexation—have we pursued our Editorial labors. We dare not say that it was to gratify you alone—nor was it altogether from motives of a selfish cast, that we undertook the publication: it was our wish and our hope that the advantages might be mutual. We know not if your expectations have been met; but for ourselves—though our best anticipations have not been realized—we frankly acknowledge the belief, that we have not been wholly unbenefited.

These are some of the gains we speak of. A few of our number are flattered with the belief, that they have made no inconsiderable improvement in writing, and that they better understand the construction of sentences and the relation of ideas than they did before the paper was commenced; some, on whom the editorial duties have particularly devolved, have made not a little proficiency in the knowledge how to transact business, and "manage the affairs of a concern;" and all have tested the practicability of conducting a literary work of this kind, in an institution like this, under favorable auspices.

As to pecuniary profits that is another thing. We—But as we suppose you to have made the ordinary acquisition of the rules of arithmetic, we will lay before you a plain statement of our funds, that you may see, at a glance, how matters stand in the treasury department, and that with the assistance of a little subtraction you may be enabled to ascertain precisely what balance in our favor does or does not incur our purse. Our accounts stand thus:

Balance we are indebted for	£. Cts.
printing, stationary, and incidental expenses	110 00
Amount of cash in the treasury to defray these bills	000 00

We did not engage in the business from any mercenary motives, so that we are saved the pain of disappointment from not having made our fortune. But we did expect that our receipts would enable us to defray our expenditures; having resolved to devote our profits—if any should accrue—to public purposes in this Institution, we had the greater encouragement to proceed, from the belief that our patronage would be more liberal. There is still due to us more than sufficient to liquidate all demands; and we request payment of this not as a FAVOR but as an act of JUSTICE. We rest under the consciousness of having fulfilled our part of the contract; and we wish any of our subscribers who may entertain doubts with regard to their having done the same, to take the only proper method of quieting their scruples: we were to furnish them with a paper, they were to pay us for it. Those who have paid us, have the approbation of their own conscience: those who have not, are referred to a short marginal note which they will find in their copies of this number; and to all we tender our wishes for their prosperity and happiness.

#### WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

On one of those sober and rather melancholy days, in the latter part of Autumn, when the shadows of morning and evening almost mingle together, and throw a gloom over the decline of the year, I passed several hours in rambling about Westminster Abbey. There was something congenial to the season in the mournful magnificence of the old pile; and as I passed its threshold, it seemed like stepping into the regions of antiquity, and losing myself among the shades of former ages.

\* \* \* \* \*

The eye gazes with wonder at clustered columns of gigantic dimensions, with arches springing from them to such an amazing height; and man, wandering about their bases, shrunk into insignificance in compari-

son with his own handy-work. The spaciousness and gloom of this vast edifice produce a profound and mysterious awe. We step cautiously and softly about, as if fearful of disturbing the hallowed silence of the tomb; while every footfall whispers along the walls, and chatters among the sepulchres, making us more sensible of the quiet we have interrupted.

It seems as if the awful nature of the place presses down upon the soul, and hushes the beholder into noiseless reverence. We feel that we are surrounded by the congregated bones of the great men of past times, who have filled history with their deeds, and the earth with their renown. And yet it almost provokes a smile at the vanity of human ambition, to see how they are crowded together and jostled in the dust; what parsimony is observed in doling out a scanty nook—a gloomy corner—a little portion of earth, to those, whom, when alive, kingdoms could not satisfy; and how many shapes, and forms, and artifices, are devised to catch the casual notice of the passenger, and save from forgetfulness, for a few short years, a name which once aspired to occupy ages of the world's thought and admiration.

I passed some time in Poet's Corner, which occupies an end of one of the transepts or crossaisles of the abbey. The monuments are generally simple; for literary men afford no striking themes for the sculptor. Shakspeare and Addison have statues erected to their memories; but the greater part have busts, medallions, and sometimes mere inscriptions. Notwithstanding the simplicity of these memorials, I have always observed that the visitors to the abbey remain longest about them. A kinder and sonder feeling takes place of that cold curiosity or vague admiration with which they gaze on the splendid monuments of the great and the heroic. They linger about

these as about the tombs of friends and companions; for indeed there is something of companionship between the author and the reader. Other men are known to posterity only through the medium of history, which is continually growing faint and obscure; but the intercourse between the author and his fellow-men is ever new, active, and immediate. He has lived for them more than for himself; he has sacrificed surrounding enjoyments, and shut himself up from the delights of social life, that he might the more intimately commune with distant minds and distant ages. Well may the world cherish his renown; for it has been purchased, not by deeds of violence and blood, but by the diligent dispensation of pleasure. Well may posterity be grateful to his memory; for he has left it an inheritance, not of empty names and sounding actions, but whole treasures of wisdom, bright gems of thought, and golden veins of language.

From Poet's Corner I continued my stroll towards that part of the abbey which contains the sepulchres of the kings. I wandered among what once were chapels, but which are now occupied by the tombs and monuments of the great. At every turn I met with some illustrious name, or the cognizance of some powerful house renowned in history. As the eye darts into these dusky chambers of death, it catches glimpses of quaint effigies: some kneeling in niches, as if in devotion; others stretched upon tombs, with hands piously pressed together; warriors in armour, as if reposing after battle; prelates with croziers and mitres; and nobles in robes and coronets, lying as it were in state. In glancing over this scene, so strangely populous, yet where every form is so still and silent, it seems almost as if we were treading a mansion of that fabled city, where every being had been suddenly transmuted into stone.

I paused to contemplate a tomb on which lay the effigy of a knight in complete armour. A large buckler was on one arm; the hands pressed together upon the breast; the face was almost covered by the morion; the legs were crossed in token of the warrior's having been engaged in the holy war. It was the tomb of a Crusader; one of those military enthusiasts, who so strangely mingled religion and romance, and whose exploits form the connecting link between fact and fiction—between the history and the fairy tale. There is something extremely picturesque in the tombs of these adventurers, decorated as they are with rude armorial bearings and gothic sculpture. They comport with the antiquated chapels in which they are generally found; and in considering them, the imagination is apt to kindle with the legendary associations, the romantic fictions, the chivalrous pomp and pageantry, which poetry has spread over the wars for the sepulchre of Christ. They are the reliques of times utterly gone by; of beings passed from recollection; of customs and manners with which our's have no affinity. They are like objects from some strange and distant land, of which we have no certain knowledge, and about which all our conceptions are vague and visionary. There is something extremely solemn and awful in those effigies on Gothic tombs, extended as if in the sleep of death, or in the supplication of the dying hour. They have an effect infinitely more impressive on my feelings than the fanciful attitudes, the over-wrought conceits, and allegorical groups, which abound on modern monuments. I have been struck, also, with the superiority of many of the old sepulchral inscriptions. There was a noble way, in former times, of saying things simply, and yet saying them proudly: and I do not know an epitaph that breathes a loftier conscious-

ness of family worth and honorable lineage, than one which affirms, of a noble house, that "all the brothers were brave, and all the sisters virtuous."

\* \* \* \* \*

While wandering about these gloomy vaults and silent aisles, studying the records of the dead, the sound of busy existence from without occasionally reaches the ear:—the rumbling of the passing equipage; the murmur of the multitude; or perhaps the light laugh of pleasure. The contrast is striking with the deathlike repose around; and it has a strange effect upon the feelings, thus to hear the surges of active life hurrying along and beating against the very walls of the sepulchre.

\* \* \* \* \*

There is a sad dreariness in this magnificence; this strange mixture of tombs and trophies; these emblems of living and aspiring ambition, close beside mementos which show the dust and oblivion in which all must sooner or later terminate. Nothing impresses the mind with a deeper feeling of loneliness, than to tread the silent and deserted scene of former throng and pageant. On looking round on the vacant stalls of the knights and their esquires, and on the rows of dusty but gorgeous banners that were once borne before them, my imagination conjured up the scene when this hall was bright with the valour and beauty of the land; glittering with the splendor of jewelled rank and military array; alive with the tread of many feet, and the hum of an admiring multitude. All had passed away; the silence of death had settled again upon the place; interrupted only by the casual chirping of birds, which had found their way into the chapel, and built their nests among its friezes and pendants—sure signs of solitariness and desertion. When I read the names inscribed on the banners, they were those of men scattered far and wide



about the world; some tossing upon distant waves; some under arms in distant lands; some mingling in the busy intrigues of courts and cabinets; all seeking to deserve one more distinction in this mansion of shadowy honours: the melancholy reward of a monument.

\* \* \* \* \*

The sound of casual footsteps had ceased from the abbey. I could only hear, now and then, the distant voice of the priest repeating the evening service, and the faint responses of the choir; these paused for a time, and all was hushed. The stillness, the desertion and obscurity that were gradually prevailing around, gave a deeper and more solemn interest to the place:

For in the silent grave no conversation,  
No joyful tread of friends, no voice of lovers,  
No careful father's counsel—nothing's heard,  
For nothing is, but all oblivion,  
Dust, and an endless darkness.

Suddenly the notes of the deep labouring organ burst upon the ear, falling with doubled and redoubled intensity, and rolling, as it were, huge billows of sound. How well do their volume and grandeur accord with this mighty building! With what pomp do they swell through its vast vaults, and breathe their awful harmony through these caves of death, and make the silent sepulchre vocal!—And now they rise in triumphant acclamation, heaving higher and higher their accordant notes, and piling sound on sound.—And now they pause, and the soft voices of the choir break out into sweet gushes of melody; they soar aloft, and warble along the roof, and seem to play about these lofty vaults like the pure airs of heaven. Again the pealing organ heaves its thrilling thunders, compressing air into music, and rolling it forth upon the soul. What long-drawn cadences! What solemn sweeping concords! It grows more and more dense and powerful—it fills the vast pile, and seems to jar the ve-

ry walls—the ear is stunned—the senses are overwhelmed. And now it is winding up in full jubilee—it is rising from the earth to heaven—the very soul seems rapt away, and floated upward on this swelling tide of harmony!

\* \* \* \* \*

The last beams of day were now faintly streaming through the painted windows in the high vaults above me: the lower parts of the abbey were already wrapped in the obscurity of twilight. The chapels and aisles grew darker and darker. The effigies of the kings faded into shadows; the marble figures of the monuments assumed strange shapes in the uncertain light; the evening breeze crept through the aisles like the cold breath of the grave; and even the distant footfall of a verger, traversing the Poet's Corner, had something strange and dreary in its sound. I slowly retraced my morning's walk, and as I passed out at the portal of the cloisters, the door, closing with jarring noise behind me, filled the whole building with echoes.

I endeavoured to form some arrangement in my mind of the objects I had been contemplating, but found they were already falling into indistinctness and confusion. Names, inscriptions, trophies, had all become confounded in my recollection, though I had scarcely taken my foot from off the threshold. What, thought I, is this vast assemblage of sepulchres but a treasury of humiliation; a huge pile of reiterated homilies on the emptiness of renown, and the certainty of oblivion! It is, indeed, the empire of death; his great shadowy palace; where he sits in state, mocking at the reliques of human glory, and spreading dust and forgetfulness on the monuments of princes. How idle a boast, after all, is the immortality of a name! Time is ever silently turning over his pages; we are too much engrossed by the story of the present, to think

of the characters and anecdotes that gave interest to the past; and each age is a volume thrown aside to be speedily forgotten. The idol of to-day pushes the hero of yesterday out of our recollection; and will, in turn, be supplanted by his successor of tomorrow. "Our fathers," says Sir Thomas Brown, "find their grave in our short memories, and sadly tell us how we may be buried in our survivors." History fades into fable; fact becomes clouded with doubt and controversy; the inscription moulders from the tablet; the statue falls from the pedestal. Columns, arches, pyramids, what are they but heaps of sand; and their epitaphs, but characters written in the dust? What is the security of the tomb, or the perpetuity of an embalment? The remains of Alexander the Great have been scattered to the wind, and his empty sarcophagus is now the mere curiosity of a museum. "The Egyptian mummies, which Cambyses or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth; Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams."

What then is to insure this pile which now towers above me from sharing the fate of mightier mausoleums? The time must come when its gilded vaults, which now spring so loftily, shall lie in rubbish beneath the feet; when, instead of the sound of melody and praise, the wind shall whistle through the broken arches, and the owl hoot from the shattered tower—when the garish sun beam shall break into these gloomy mansions of death; and the ivy twine round the fallen column; and the fox-glove hang its blossoms about the nameless urn, as if in mockery of the dead. Thus man passes away; his name perishes from record and recollection; his history is as a tale that is told, and his very monument becomes a ruin.

any have gathered Sketch Book.

\* Sir Thomas Brown.

A bad husband is sometimes a good father, but a bad wife can never be a good mother.

There may be some truth in the above *Laconism*, though there is still more in the plain position that good wives and good husbands make the best parents. How can a man love his offspring if he does not love her to whom he is indebted for their being? If all other ties fail to produce that feeling upon which the dearest affections depend, can the mysterious and indefinable sympathy, springing from the relation of parent and child sustained by two beings, who see in their offspring, a new existence of themselves, the impress of their own being, in all the purity and innocence of infantile beauty, can this fail to awaken the fondest emotions, the sincerest attachment, reflected from the child to the partner of its being? If it does, what cord is there in such a heart, for the touch of sympathy, to cause to respond to virtuous impulses.

**POSTERITY.**—It is pleasant to observe how free the present age is in laying taxes on the next. "Future ages shall talk of this;" "this shall be famous to all posterity." Whereas their time and thoughts will be taken up about present things as our's are now.

#### TIME.

**TIME**, the cradle of Hope, but the grave of Ambition, is the stern corrector of fools, but the salutary counsel of the wise, bringing all they dread to the one, and all they desire to the other; but like Cassandra it warns us with a voice that even the sagest discredit too long, and the silliest believe too late.—Wisdom walks before it, opportunity with it, and repentance behind it; he that has made it his friend will have little to fear from his enemies; but he that has made it his enemy, will have little to hope from his friends.

## POETIC DEPARTMENT.



[FOR THE FOCUS.]

## THE FACE OF A FRIEND.

[FROM THE ALBUM OF E. M. S.]

Have you ever perceiv'd, in a clear blue  
night,  
How the white drifted snow, like a mantle of  
light.

Hides the landscape for many a mile?  
The Moon seems to shed a sweet stillness a-  
round.

And as her soft rays gently fall to the ground  
They are met with a bright but cold smile.

But when the Sun follows the twilight of  
dawn,  
And throws his warm beams o'er the wide-  
spreading lawn,

What a change in the scenery appears!  
Then Nature is seen to revive at the touch,  
And, as if the soft thrill were for feeling too  
much,  
She melts in a flood of bright tears.

What a type this of Friendship:—If frigid  
and chill  
Comes the glance of another, no soul-stir-  
ring thrill.

To the heart will its influence send:  
But if with affection the features should  
burn,

The heart will sure throb with responsive re-  
turn,  
And our souls in sweet unison blend.

[FOR THE FOCUS.]

## SUICIDE.

Suicide!—In thought as fearful, as in pur-  
pose base—

The Hero's bane, the Coward's antidote.—  
The first bears up against the ills of Fate,  
'Gainst Fortune's frowns—a friend's depravi-  
ty—

A mistress false—a country's base ingrati-  
tude,

And all the miseries that man inherits;  
Yet rises still superior to them all:

Thy meager refuge scorns, and dares to live,  
Nay, glories in his stern philosophy.

His hope of Heaven is his strap on Earth;

He feels his spirit rise as ills assail him;

He nobly lives—or dies to live forever.

The other, like the poor despairing mar-  
iner,

Buffets awhile the angry billows' roar;

But when a wave, more boisterous than the  
rest,

Rolls on his head, his firmness sinks beneath  
it:

And losing Confidence, he loses Strength—  
Abandons Hope, and sinks into Eternity.  
Such is the fear a Suicide betrays—  
Is madly brave, but braving Heaven's a cow-  
ard. S.

[FOR THE FOCUS.]

## PATRIOTIC VIRTUE.

Hast thou beheld the setting sun  
in cloudless majesty retire?  
And now, although his course is run,  
He gilds ten thousand orbs with fire.

'Tis thus the faithful patriot dies;  
'Tis thus the hero yields his breath;  
'Tis thus he calmly shuts his eyes,  
And thus in glory sinks in death.

But like those radiant beams that gild  
The evening stars with silver light,  
His fame the universe has fill'd,  
And shines though he has set in night. C.

[FOR THE FOCUS.]

## ACROSTIC.

At the close of the day, in your favorite  
bower,  
Near the fount of some streamlet that mur-  
mur'd of love,  
A harp in your hand all in tune to the hour,  
Cascaded by the Muses, you sung to the dove.  
Reechoed the woodlands; the birds from  
their sleeping  
Each sung to the night, as if day shone a-  
round;  
O'er the hills and the vallies the breezes  
came sweeping,  
Not to injure the harp—but to kiss the sweet  
sound. C.

## THE ART OF PRINTING.

BY T. G. FESSENDEN.

Bliss be the memory of the Sage,  
Who taught the typographic page  
To teem with symbols, heaven-design'd  
The mute interpreters of mind.

The world at length had learn'd to prize  
The art of speaking to the eyes,  
Which had, by modes, which Cadmus  
taught,  
Giv'n immortality to thought;—

When FAUSTUS, by celestial skill,  
Found means to multiply at will  
Those silent heralds of the kind  
Which give ubiquity to mind;—

Explored that art which brings to view  
All that we knew—our fathers knew,  
And which develops ev'ry hour  
That knowledge, which results in power.

That art which gives to man's control  
Celestial treasures of the soul,  
Transcending, many thousand fold,  
Golconda's gems, and Ophir's gold

What but the Printer's Art sublime  
Can register the deeds of time;  
Recording all that's said and done  
Most worthy note beneath the sun?

The Poet, Patriot, Saint and Sage,  
Have habitations in his page;  
And never absent when you call,  
Alike accessible to all.

He introduces man to man,  
Of every nation, tribe or clan,  
The humble to the high—**MOST HIGH**,  
In palaces above the sky.

Then bless the memory of the Sage  
Who taught the typographic page  
To teem with symbols, heaven-design'd,  
The silent heralds of the mind.

### A JEU D'ESPRIT.

ADDRESSED TO MISS C—, A LITTLE, SHORT  
LADY.

'Satis PARVA res est.' AMPHITRION.

When any thing abounds, we find  
That nobody will have it;  
But when there's **LITTLE** of the kind  
Don't all the people crave it?

If wives are evil, as 'tis known  
And woefully confess'd,  
The man who's wise will surely own  
A **LITTLE** one is best.

The god of love's a little wight,  
But beautiful as thought;  
Thou too art **LITTLE**, fair as light,  
And every thing in **SHORT**.\*

O, happy girl! I think thee so,  
For mark the Poet's song—  
"Man wants but **LITTLE** here below  
Nor wants that little **LONG**."

\*Nulla Volutas LONGA est.—SENECA.

### TUNE—Old Grimes.

It was from public patronage  
The Focus took its rise:  
And now that fos'tring soil has fail'd,  
The Focus simply—dies.

### NOTICE.

As the number of subscribers to the Literary Register is not sufficiently great to meet the expenditures in publishing the paper, it has been found necessary that responsible persons should incur the risk of loss: since the Faculty are altogether unwilling that the young gentlemen under their care should en-

gage in any enterprise which might involve their parents, and relatives. The public will therefore please to consider the undersigned as Proprietors as well as Editors of the Literary Register. It may be asked why the undertaking was not relinquished in the circumstances which have been stated? We answer simply and candidly, because we believe a paper of the description of that, which we design publishing, may be highly useful to the community at large, and are therefore willing to risk somewhat in making the experiment. Perhaps the public will eventually approve of our efforts. However this may be, we will hazard the expenditures of one year with our present number of subscribers. If our patrons should increase, the Register may be continued after the period for which we have engaged; and if not,—If the deficiency of patronage should still discourage us, we will at least have the consolation of knowing that our failure was in an attempt, which we deem no unworthy one, to diffuse useful Knowledge amongst our fellow citizens.

R. H. BISHOP,  
W. H. MCGUFFEY,  
J. E. ANNAN.

The Literary Register will be printed at the Societies' Press in the College building.

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### THE LITERARY FOCUS.

Is published monthly, each number containing 24 pages, at \$1 in advance—**\$1.25** in six months—**\$1.50** if not paid until the expiration of the year.

All letters and communications addressed to the Editors, must be **POST-PAID**.

PUBLISHED FROM THE SOCIETIES' PRESS.

J. D. SMITH, PR.



